

STUDENT SECTION



U.S. Immigration Regulations & Procedures For Students in the United States

There have been a number of changes in U.S. immigration regulations. This is to inform you of these changes and remind you of major immigration regulations currently in effect. Please choose your topic from list below.

IMMIGRATION REGULATIONS & PROCEDURES

1. Special Registration

- Special registration is now conducted at ports-of-entry (airports). You are no longer required to report to local immigration offices annually, unless specifically advised to do so by immigration authorities.
- You are no longer required to file form AR11 (address change form). Instead, **you must report your change of address to your International Program Office within 5 days of that change.** The International Officer will then update your address in SEVIS.

2. Entering the United States

- The special registration process at the port-of-entry remains the same. You will be fingerprinted, photographed, and interviewed under oath. Your documentation must be valid and current (passport and I-20 form). The Immigration Officer will stamp both copies of your I-20 and return page 3 to you.
- A continuing student whose visa has expired must apply for a new visa at the U.S. Embassy in Kuwait after exiting the U.S.
- If you are transferring schools and you are entering with an I-20 for the new school, be sure that you have completed the transfer procedures for the new school and that your transfer to the new school has been recorded in SEVIS.

3. Departing the United States

- Students subject to special registration must depart the U.S. via Special Ports of Departure (POD). **If you fail to do so, you may be banned** from entering the U.S.
- You must report to an Immigration Officer at the airport to register your departure from the U.S.
- Arrive early since it is sometimes difficult to locate immigration authorities.

4. Student and Exchange Visitor Information System (SEVIS)

The Student and Exchange Visitor Information System (SEVIS), the new electronic database is now fully operational. This system allows universities to maintain correct information on students including academic and enrollment status and addresses. The data is available to all U.S. immigration officers and U.S. embassies throughout the world.

Schools are required to report to the BCIS (formerly, INS) the following information on international students:

- Failure of the student to maintain status or complete the degree program.
- Change of the student's or dependent's U.S. address or legal name.
- Students who have graduated early or prior to the program end date.
- Disciplinary action taken by the school against the student as a result of conviction of a crime.
- Students who either fail to register or drop below full course of study each term.
- The start date of the students' next semester.
- Any other information requested by SEVIS to the Designated School Office (DSO – usually an assigned person in the International School Office) with regards to a student's current status.

Students are required to pay a SEVIS fee of \$200.00.

5. Student Compliance with U.S. Immigration

- You are not allowed to arrive in the U.S. earlier than 30 days prior to the program start date as indicated on the I-20.
- You are required to attend, for at least one term, the school listed on the I-20 used to enter the U.S.
- Register with the International Student Office of your school when you arrive on campus for the first time. It is a good idea to check with the International Student Adviser at least once per term to make sure you are in compliance with BCIS rules.
- All students are required to report to the International Student Office any change in U.S. and/or home country address within 5 days of that change.

- You must maintain fulltime enrollment. This is defined as follows:
 - 12 credits per term for undergraduate students.
 - 9 credits per term for Master’s students without university assistantships.
 - 6 credits per term for Master’s students with university assistantships.
 - 9 credits per term for Doctoral students without university assistantships.
 - 3 credits per term for Doctoral students with university assistantships.
- You may be less than full-time ONLY ONE SEMESTER per degree program due to academic difficulty or improper course placement. In this event, you must be enrolled for at least one class and you must have the permission of the DSO for the under-enrollment.
- You must have a valid passport at all times while in the U.S.
- You must have a valid I-20 that reflects your correct name (as it appears in your passport), birth date, level of educational program, and major.
- You must not overstay the program end date on the I-20. If you are not completing within the date specified, you must seek an extension of stay through the International Student Office of the university.
- You are permitted to work on campus up to 20 hours per week and full-time during vacation periods. You cannot exceed these hours without permission.
- Besides the rules of the Cultural Division, BCIS permits you to count only one on-line course per term as part of the full-time course requirement.
- F-2 dependents are not allowed to enroll in degree programs. They must apply for a change of status to F-1 and wait for the change of status to be granted before beginning classes. F-2’s may participate in recreational courses that do not count towards a degree.
- When transferring schools, you must provide your current school with proof of admission to the new school. Your current school will enter a release date into SEVIS. This is usually the last day of the current academic term at your home school. You are allowed to change your mind up until the release date. Once the release date has passed, you will be issued a new I-20 by the new school, completing the transfer process.
- When transferring schools, you may not exceed a period of 5 months between the final day of enrollment at the last school and the start date of the new school.
- If you withdraw from, or are asked to leave the university, you must depart the U.S. immediately.

6. Actions That Will Result in Your Being Out-Of-Status

- Remaining in the U.S. after withdrawing from school or being dismissed or suspended. In these circumstances, you must depart the U.S. immediately.
- Failing to report to your university by the date indicated on your I-20.
- Failing to report to the International Student Office of your university within 10 days of your I-20's reporting date if you are enrolling at the university for the first time.
- Unexcused absences from classes, particularly in Intensive English Programs.
- Dropping below full-time course load without prior authorization.
- Having an expired passport.
- Working without a valid working permit.
- Failure to report change of address or name to the International Program Office of your university within 5 days.
- Being convicted of a crime.
- Remaining in the U.S. longer than 60 days after completing your program.
- If you have a medical condition interrupting your studies, you must present a medical excuse to your International Student Office. Depending on your medical condition, you may be allowed to reduce your course load or if the condition is very serious to withdraw from the school. You are allowed an aggregate of 12 months for the entire program of study where a reduced course load or absence from school is permitted. Students must gain BCIS permission through their International Office for each term they are ill and seeking medical withdrawal or reduced course load.

Out-of-status means that you have violated the terms of your “F” or “J” (student) visa. Your school is required to report to the BCIS all students who are out of status.

You are reminded that the regulations outlined above represent U.S. Law. As stated in the U.S. Federal Registry, non-compliance with these regulations may result in prosecution and/or deportation from the United States.

Immigration regulations are subject to change. We will attempt to inform you of any changes through this website. You must also check for changes at the immigration website at <http://uscis.gov> (link is external).

Note that this report covers BCIS regulations. You are reminded that you are also subject to regulations of your particular Kuwait scholarship program.